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RR RUEHIK  
DE RUEHAH #0181 0391224  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 081224Z FEB 10 ZDK  
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4207  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE  
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 6229  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3907  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3766  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 4473  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1473  
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 4382  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 000181

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN; ANKARA FOR AGRICULTURAL COUNSELOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [SOCI](#) [PGOV](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: LOW COTTON YIELDS LIKELY TO  
CONTINUE IN 2010

REF: ASHGABAT 28

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for Public Internet.

¶2. (SBU) Turkmen government media was silent about the poor results of the 2009 cotton harvest until President Berdimuhamedov dismissed several district governors and reprimanded the governors of Dashoguz and Lebap provinces during a January 15 Cabinet of Ministers meeting. He announced that the dismissals and reprimands were for failure to ensure the fulfillment of the government's cotton orders for the districts and provinces. According to Embassy economic assistant's contact from Dashoguz Province, the province harvested 123,200 tons, which was 56 percent of its quota.

¶3. (SBU) A cotton grower in Lebap Province told poloff that because of excessive rain in the spring, farmers had to replant cotton twice, which pushed back the entire cotton season. Both contacts reported that poor quality seed and delays in the supplies of fertilizer and water, among other inputs, caused poor germination and vegetation, which resulted in a poor harvest. (NOTE: The government has a monopoly on seed sales. It gives cotton seeds to farmers. In return, farmers sell their cotton harvest to the state at a fixed price. END NOTE.) The Lebap grower stated that the cotton yield in 2009 was the lowest since the 1940s, about 1.7 tons per hectare versus an average yield of two tons. According to an informal estimate, the amount of cotton harvested by Lebap farmers was 180,000 tons, 60 percent of the province's quota.

¶4. (SBU) Based on the publicly reported official statistics for the cotton harvest in the three successful provinces of Ahal, Mary, and Balkan (reftel), and the unofficial harvest estimates for Dashoguz and Lebap provinces, the overall harvest was 823,533 tons of raw cotton. As in the previous years

of Berdimuhamedov's presidency, the government did not provide any final statistics on the harvest.

15. (SBU) COMMENT: The Turkmen Government has announced cotton goals for 2010 at the same level as the 2009 goals. To improve yields, the government would need to carry out a series of measures, including delivery of better quality seed and timely supply of inputs, as well as developing better techniques for growing cotton, and offering incentives to farmers to increase productivity. Without any of these changes, the harvest in 2010 will probably be no more successful than it was in 2009. END COMMENT.